

HAGEL'S DAY: The Pentagon chief is set to testify at 9:30 a.m. before SASC on the Pentagon's FY14 budget. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, who testified yesterday before HAC-D, has faced a series of questions from lawmakers over the past few days regarding BRAC, TRICARE fee hikes and sexual assault. He's also been peppered with a number of questions about specific weapons issues, including the Eurocopter UH-72 Lakota and the dispute between Beechcraft and Sierra Nevada over the Air Force's light-attack helicopter program for the Afghan military.

Hagel's appearances on the Hill over the past few days have also offered Republicans who opposed him during the confirmation process a chance to make nice. HASC Chairman Buck McKeon, for instance, recently awarded Hagel an 'A' for his performance as Defense secretary thus far. Not so for Rep. Randy Forbes. "I've never heard that many 'I don't knows' from a secretary of Defense," the thoroughly unimpressed Virginia Republican told POLITICO's Juana Summers.

"Now, he may want to grow into the job," Forbes added. "I certainly hope he does. The frightening thing for many of us is that this is a very difficult job to grow into."